

**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
Website: www.fire.ca.gov
(916) 653-9424



R1

December 22, 2005

Farm Bill 2007 Comments
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretariat, Room 116A
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-3355

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing on behalf of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) regarding the 2007 Farm Bill and its importance to our state.

The importance of California's forests to rural economies cannot be underestimated. Conifer forests and woodlands cover over 21 million acres in California, of which 16.6 million acres are capable of growing more than 20 cubic feet per acre per year. Of this total of 16.6 million acres, 7.3 million acres are privately owned with the bulk of this ownership in non-industrial forest ownership. Most notable is that there are an estimated 58,000 privately held parcels ranging in size from 20 to 500 acres covering 3.6 million acres.

In all regions of California, net annual growth exceeds harvest. This increasing forest density is leading to declining forest health, accelerated mortality during cycles of drought, pests and other environmental disturbances and has increased the threats to urban communities from wildfire.

Pressures on non-industrial forest landowners to convert to non-timber uses will continue to grow in light of California's growing population. Forest health and ecosystem resiliency will continue to be influenced by environmental stressors which are anticipated to be impacted significantly by climate change. It is more critical than ever to recognize the importance of these non-industrial timberlands and the critical role the owners of these parcels have in providing for ecosystem health and resiliency, carbon sequestration, wildlife, clean water, community health and safety through fuels reductions, and wood products. Given the large number of landowners and the economic pressures being brought to bear on this landowner group for conversion of their forested parcels to non-timberland uses, it is more important than ever before to provide for landowner assistance programs, economic incentives, and technical support.

For these reasons, CDF has strongly supported the existing programs in the current State and Private Forestry area and encourages retention and enhanced funding for these programs as part of the 2007 Farm Bill. These programs include Forest Stewardship,

CONSERVATION IS WISE—KEEP CALIFORNIA GREEN AND GOLDEN

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONSERVE ENERGY. FOR TIPS AND INFORMATION, VISIT "FLEX YOUR POWER" AT WWW.CA.GOV.

Forest Land Enhancement, Forest Legacy, Reforestation Nurseries and Genetic Resources, Urban and Community Forestry, Cooperative Lands Forest Health Protection, and Conservation Education.

CDF is also strongly supportive of looking to expand programs or titles in the 2007 Farm Bill to provide for funding for technology and pilot projects to encourage development of markets for small logs, carbon, bio-fuels and bio-energy. This funding should include funding for technology transfer and market development for production of cellulosic ethanol, gasification, bio-fuels and other products associated with biomass/sawlog utilization. In addition, the Farm Bill should provide funding through existing or new titles to address forest health/climate change/fuel reduction, ecosystem services, carbon sequestration strategies and technology transfer as means of providing additional market based incentives for landowners to keep their forest lands available for production of wood products and part of a working forest landscape.

The issues are complex and will require a broad ranging integrated approach if they are to be addressed effectively. The following programs administered by CDF, in cooperation with the United States Forest Service, have been particularly effective in addressing the needs for providing support and incentive to non-industrial forestland owners:

Forest Land Enhancement Program

In California we have used the Forest Land Enhancement Program to assist in post fire rehabilitation and fuels management. The projects funded have not only provided a direct benefit to the landowner, but they also have served as "demonstrations" of good stewardship for neighboring landowners. The Forest Land Enhancement Program cost-share dollars are more leveraged than the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) dollars that are going primarily to agricultural interests. When communities embrace good stewardship within their wildland-urban-interface zones, there is a cost savings to government. Fires in these communities are more easily managed and controlled with less loss of life and property, less suppression cost, and less environmental damage. Further, fuels management often results in an improvement in Forest Health, as treated forest stands can more easily withstand the rigors of periodic drought and insect attack.

In addition, Forest Land Enhancement Program and Forest Stewardship Program funded Technical Assistance personnel have been the only direct source of forestry advice to the non-industrial private forest landowner in many areas of California. With sawmills continuing to close due to ever declining U.S. Forest Service timber harvesting, there are fewer private foresters available to assist landowners in the management of their family owned forest lands. This situation is particularly acute in Southern California, where the removal of drought and bark beetle killed trees has become critical to protecting forest communities from catastrophic fire risks. The contractors necessary to accomplish vast amounts of tree removal did not exist. Specialized heavy equipment for harvest and fuels reduction was not readily available. Mills to process the logs did not exist in close proximity. Logs could not be economically shipped and many were stacked and burned.

This lack of harvesting and wood processing infrastructure resulted in more tax dollars spent on clean-up than would have been spent if this drought-caused beetle-kill had occurred in the more infrastructure-rich northern part of the state.

Forest Legacy Program

While huge amounts of tax dollars are going toward the fee title purchase of park lands and wildlife habitat by public agencies, the Forest Legacy Program acquires private land working forest easements that provide many of the same public ecosystem service benefits at a much lower cost, while keeping lands in private ownership and on the tax rolls. Forest Legacy is the only program we have in California devoted to purchasing conservation easements on working forest lands. Development pressures on working forest lands continue to increase in California. This year, we anticipate placing close to 8,000 acres of working forestlands under conservations easements, through leveraging federal Forest Legacy with other state and local funds and private donations. Given the area of forestland under development pressure in the state, California has received relatively modest Forest Legacy Program allocations relative to other states. We believe that the improved performance of our Forest Legacy Program and the strong candidate parcels we have put forward merit an increased level of federal funding to California for this program.

Reforestation Nurseries and Genetic Resources

Reforestation Nurseries and Genetic Resources funding is extremely important to us. Funds provided through this program have allowed the State Seed Bank to remain in operation through severe California Budget cuts. The State Seed Bank maintains the genetic material necessary to reforest the state and private lands in California with seed zone, elevation and species specific forest tree seedlings. Additionally, these funds have been invaluable in maintaining the operation of the state nursery program.

Urban and Community Forestry Program

The Farm Bill is the crucial base source of funding for California's Urban and Community Forestry Program. Funds from the Farm Bill are awarded to the USDA Forest Service - Urban and Community Forestry Program. A major problem with the program is that the states with the large populations are funded at the lowest per capita levels. At only three cents per person, California ranked 47th in per capita funding in 2005. California is expecting to receive only about two cents per person in 2006. As the program is targeted at urban areas, it would make sense that funding would be based in large part on urban population. The historic allocation methodology has limited our urban and community forestry programs. We would encourage the framing of the 2007 Farm Bill to include a funding approach that focuses assistance on areas that have the greatest amounts of genuine urban forests.

Even with the historically limited Farm Bill funding levels, however, California has been able to deliver an Urban Forestry program that is having positive benefits to the people of California. We have been able to leverage federal funding to conduct research,

raise awareness, support community groups and encourage urban forestry. As a direct result of the Farm Bill, members of our urban forest community are currently able to compete for over \$3 million of settlement funds to use on urban forestry to improve air quality in the Los Angeles area.

For 2006, California is anticipating a 26 percent reduction in federal Urban and Community Forestry Program. The urban forest community in California will leverage that money into much more; but we still need a greater level of base support. As a national leader in urban forestry, with an urban population of over 30 million people, California can do much more for Urban Forestry nationwide, with our fair share of funding. The entire Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program can show far more success by appropriately funding the states that have large urban populations.

Cooperative Lands Forest Health Protection Program

The Farm Bill greatly aids forest pest management in California through the Cooperative Lands Forest Health Protection Program. Forest pest detection and evaluation is a critical part of the early warning system for native pest outbreaks and introduced pest detection. Examples of major pest outbreaks in California include Pitch Canker, Sudden Oak Death, bark beetles, and a find of Asian Longhorned Beetle in Sacramento in 2005. The integrated pest management principles expressed in the Farm Bill is strongly supported in our pest control programs. State and federal agencies working together provide a more effective forest pest management program in California. Forest insect and disease research is another key aspect of our programs and helps to improve the effectiveness of our program. The consequences of not having these forest management activities in place, and the negative impacts on forest health, are far greater than the cost of continuing these program supports.

Conservation Education

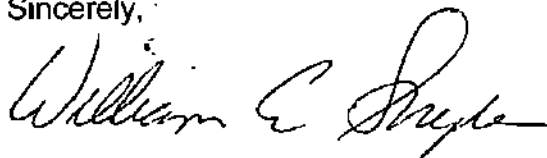
Conservation Education, though a small program, is very important in this state. The seed money provided through the program assists in funding Project Learning Tree, where we are able to provide educational expertise, teacher contacts and training, and supplemental curriculum materials focusing on natural resources. This program allows us to build positive community relations with a population that is distanced from natural resources and has little to no understanding of the importance of working forestlands as producers of both commodities and environmental services.

In addition to these programs, CDF encourages retention and expansion of the EQIP and Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and delivered locally through Resource Conservation.

December 22, 2005
Page Five

Districts. We look forward to a new Farm Bill that will strengthen existing state and private forestry conservation programs and further enable family owned forests to maximize the commodity and environmental contributions of their lands to society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William E. Snyder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" being the most prominent.

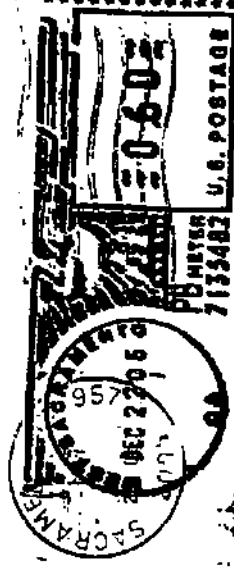
William E. Snyder
Deputy Director for Resource Management

cc: Karen Scarborough, Resources Agency
Bernie Weingardt, Region Chief

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
1416 NINTH STREET
P.O. BOX 94246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY, USDA

2005 DEC 30 P 2 57



Farm Bill 2007 Comments
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretariate, Room 116A
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-3355

KEEP CALIFORNIA GREEN and FIRE SAFE

2005042355

